

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A conference endpoint, comprising:
  - a network interface for couple the conference endpoint to a computer network;
  - a data conference initiation module coupled to the network interface for transmitting a data conference initiation request to a conference server over the computer network and for receiving a data conference code generated by the conference server over the computer network.
2. The conference endpoint of claim 1 wherein the data conference initiation module is further configured for transmitting a data conference invitation to a remote device over a conference bridge, the data conference invitation including information representative of the data conference code.
3. The conference endpoint of claim 2 wherein the conference invitation comprises a string of Dual Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) tones.
4. The conference endpoint of claim 2 wherein the conference bridge transmits in-band audio signals.
5. The conference endpoint of claim 1 wherein the data conference initiation module transmits the conference initiation request in response to a predetermined user input.
6. The conference endpoint of claim 1 wherein the data conference initiation module is further configured to transmit a conference join request to the conference server over the computer network responsive to a received conference invitation.

1 7. The conference endpoint of claim 1 wherein the conference code uniquely  
2 identifies the conference.

1 8. A method for initiating and maintaining a data conference, comprising  
2 the steps of:  
3 transmitting a data conference initiation requesting to a conference server  
4 over a computer network;  
5 receiving at a local conference endpoint an unique data conference code  
6 from the conference server over the computer network;  
7 generating an audio signal representative of the conference code; and  
8 transmitting the audio signal to at least one remote conference endpoint  
9 over a conference bridge.

1 9. The method of claim 8 wherein the step of generating the audio signal  
2 further comprises generating a string of DTMF tones.

1 10. The method of claim 8 further comprising the step of establishing a  
2 connection between the local conference endpoint and the at least one remote  
3 conference endpoint.

1 11. The method of claim 8 wherein the at least one remote conference  
2 endpoint responsively transmits a conference join request including the  
3 conference code to the conference server.

1 12. The method of claim 8 further comprising the step of maintaining a list of  
2 data conference participants at the conference server based on received data  
3 conference join requests.

1 13. The method of claim 12 further comprising the step of transmitting  
2 conference data from the conference server to the data conference participants.

1 14. The method of claim 8 wherein the conference code uniquely identifies  
2 the conference.

1 15. The method of claim 8 wherein the conference bridge transmits in-band  
2 audio signals.

1 16. A conferencing system, comprising:  
2 a conference server coupled to a computer network for managing data  
3 conferences;  
4 a first conference endpoint coupled to the computer network; and  
5 a second conference endpoint having a data conference initiation module  
6 for transmitting a data conference initiation request to the conference server over  
7 the computer network, for receiving a data conference code generated by the  
8 conference server over the computer network, and for responsively transmitting  
9 a data conference invitation to the first conference endpoint over a conference  
10 bridge.

1 17. The conferencing system of claim 14 wherein the conference bridge  
2 transmits in-band audio signals.

1 18. A machine readable medium having embodied thereon a program, the  
2 program being executable by a machine to perform method steps for  
3 coordinating a conference, the method steps comprising:  
4 transmitting a conference initiation request to a conference server over a  
5 computer network;  
6 receiving a conference code from the conference server in response to the  
7 conference initiating request over the computer network;  
8 generating an audio signal representative of the conference code; and  
9 transmitting the audio signal to at least one conference endpoint over a  
10 conference bridge.

- 1 19. The machine readable medium of claim 16, the program being executable  
2 by a machine to perform method steps wherein the conference bridge is a  
3 telephone line.
- 1 20. A conference endpoint, comprising:  
2 means for transmitting a conference initiation request to a conference  
3 server over a computer network;  
4 means for receiving a conference code from the conference server in  
5 response to the conference initiating request over the computer network;  
6 means for generating an audio signal representative of the conference  
7 code; and  
8 means for transmitting the audio signal to at least one conference  
9 endpoint over a conference bridge.